

WARNING



COMMUNITY WATCH

All items of value on these premises have been marked
for ready identification by law enforcement agencies
anywhere in the United States.



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**The way to A CRIME FREE and SECURE
NEIGHBORHOOD**

WHAT IS COMMUNITY WATCH?

COMMUNITY WATCH is a Crime Prevention program that involves citizens working with each other and with law enforcement agencies to reduce crime and victimization in their communities. It involves:

- ☞ Citizens protecting themselves and their property by using common sense crime prevention practices.
- ☞ Neighbors getting to know each other, watching out for each other and acting on or reporting suspicious activities.
- ☞ Citizens working with groups, community leaders, and, more importantly, law enforcement agencies to make entire communities safe and free from crime.

COMMUNITY WATCH, CITIZEN ALERT, NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH or BLOCK WATCH: the names may differ, but the idea is the same. Neighbors looking out for each other.

WHY START A COMMUNITY WATCH?

Because law enforcement officers cannot be on every street corner, citizen involvement is necessary to combat crime. On average, there are approximately two law enforcement officers for every 1,000 citizens.

You and your neighbors are the ones who really know what is going on in your community. By cooperating with each other and with the police, citizens can help fight crime in the most effective way -- preventing the victimization of themselves, their families and friends. You are the key element in fighting crime.

GET INVOLVED!!

COMMUNITY WATCH WORKS

The goal of **COMMUNITY WATCH** is to make criminals aware that every move is being watched and will be reported to the police.

Across North Carolina, citizens work together to secure their homes, mark their valuables, identify drug dealers, develop child safety programs, and improve the environment in which they and their families live.

TO START A COMMUNITY WATCH

1. Contact your local Police or Sheriff's Department about setting up a **COMMUNITY WATCH** program. They can assist with information, materials and technical advice. Ask for the Crime Prevention Officer.
2. Schedule a meeting with your neighbors in a church, home, community building, volunteer fire department or other location.
3. Invite the Crime Prevention Officer or other law enforcement officer to speak at your original meeting to help get your **COMMUNITY WATCH** program started.
4. Contact every resident in your community and invite them to the meeting. Do this by making door-to-door visits, phone calls, or mailing flyers.
5. Hold your meeting.

COMMUNITY WATCH WORKS WHEN PEOPLE GET INVOLVED AND STAY INVOLVED

SOME COMMUNITY WATCH ACTIVITIES

Operation I.D. - This program involves engraving your valuable personal property with your driver's license number thus making it easier to identify if it is stolen. Your local crime prevention officer may be able to supply you with an engraver.

Community Clean up - Sponsor a community clean-up effort with your group. You are already working on cleaning up the crime in your community - make it a beautiful place to live in at the same time.

Community Watch signs - Your local law enforcement agency will place signs on local streets indicating a COMMUNITY WATCH in your area.

National Night Out - Every year, the National Town Watch Association invites communities to participate in National Night Out Against Crime. Contact your local law enforcement agency or the North Carolina Crime Prevention Division for more information.

Victim Assistance - Should one of your neighbors be victimized, you can know how to help that person. Contact the local victim's advocate office, the Division of Victim and Justice Services, or the Department of Social Services for more information.

Awareness Programs - There may be some specific crime problems in your neighborhood that your Community Watch group wants to target. Educate your members on such topics as:

Drug Abuse Prevention

Sexual Abuse Prevention

Child Abuse Protection

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

.... and many others. **Don't limit yourselves!!**

REMEMBER: Criminals gravitate to places where they feel safe and secure. They avoid neighborhoods where they are likely to get caught. When they are neither wanted nor welcome, they go someplace else. **Start a COMMUNITY WATCH program today!!**



THE STRUCTURE OF A COMMUNITY WATCH

- Any community resident can join - young and old, single and married, renter and homeowner.

- A few concerned residents, a community organization, or a law enforcement agency can spearhead the effort to organize a Community Watch.
- Members learn how to make their homes more secure, watch out for each other and the neighborhood, and report activities that raise their suspicions to the police or sheriff's office.
- You can form a Community Watch group around any geographical unit: a block, apartment, park, business area, public housing complex, office, marina.
- Watch groups are not vigilantes. They are extra eyes and ears for reporting crime and helping neighbors. Community Watch helps build pride and serves as a springboard for efforts that address community concerns such as recreation for youth, childcare, and affordable housing.

GETTING ORGANIZED

When a group decides to form a Community Watch, it:

- ① Contacts the police or sheriff's department or local crime prevention organization for help in training members in home security and reporting skills and for information on local crime patterns.
- ② Selects a coordinator and block captains who are responsible for organizing meetings and relaying information to members.
- ③ Recruits members, keeping up-to-date on new residents and making special efforts to involve the elderly, working parents, and young people.
- ④ Works with local government or law enforcement to put up Community Watch signs, usually after at least 70% of all households are enrolled.

NEIGHBORS LOOK FOR....

- ☐ Someone screaming or shouting for help.
- ☐ Someone looking into windows and parked cars.
- ☐ Unusual noises.
- ☐ Property being taken out of houses where no one is at home or closed businesses.
- ☐ Cars, vans, or trucks moving slowly with no apparent destination, or without lights.
- ☐ Anyone being forced into a vehicle.
- ☐ A stranger sitting in a car or stopping to talk to a child.
- ☐ Abandoned cars.

Report these incidents to the police (373-2222 or 911). Talk about the problem with your neighbors.

KEEPING YOUR COMMUNITY WATCH ALIVE

It's an unfortunate fact that when a neighborhood crime crisis goes away, so does enthusiasm for Community Watch. Work to keep your Watch group a vital force for community well being.

- ✓ Organize regular meetings that focus on current issues such as drug abuse, "hate" or bias-motivated

violence, crime in schools, child care before and after school, recreational activities for young people, and victim services.

- ✓ Organize community patrols to walk around streets or apartment complexes and alert police to crime and suspicious activities and identify problems needing attention. People in cars with cellular phones or CB radios can patrol.
- ✓ Adopt a park or school playground. Pick up litter, repair broken equipment, paint over graffiti.
- ✓ Work with local building code officials to require dead bolt locks, smoke alarms, and other safety devices in new and existing homes and commercial buildings.
- ✓ Publish a newsletter that gives prevention tips and local crime news, recognizes residents of all ages who have “made a difference,” and highlights community events.
- ✓ Don’t forget social events that give neighbors a chance to know each other - a block party, potluck dinner, volleyball or softball game, picnic.



HOW TO REPORT A CRIME

If you observe any of the suspicious activities described in this brochure, call 373-2222 or 911 immediately. The longer you wait to call the police, the greater the chances are that the suspect will get away.

Here are some guidelines to follow:

- ❶ When the 911 - Emergency Operator answers, say, “I’m calling in reference to a possible.....,” and name the **type** of crime you suspect. You need not go into detail at this point.
- ❷ Give your name and location. If you don’t know the block number, give the closest cross street or intersection.
- ❸ Stand by to answer further questions, if necessary. The 911-Operator is trained to get the necessary information in order to dispatch a car and to advise the officer about just the barest facts in the incident. By giving the operator a lengthy account by phone, you’ll be delaying the officer’s arrival. **BE BRIEF!!**
- ❹ Stay on the line until the 911-Operator terminates the call.
- ❺ Once the officer arrives, then tell him or her as much as you know about the incident.

As the victim or witness to a crime, you can also help by giving police an accurate and complete description of the suspect and his/her vehicle. Be prepared to give such a description to the Operator, if asked, and/or to the investigating officer:

- ☞ Sex, race and approximate age.
- ☞ Height (compared to some other person or object near the suspect).
- ☞ Weight (also compared to some other person).
- ☞ Color of hair and eyes.
- ☞ Any visible scars.
- ☞ Description of the person’s clothing.
- ☞ Any peculiarities of speech, walk, manner of dress, hair style.
- ☞ Vehicle description: license tag number; make, model and color; distinguishing characteristics (dents, missing parts, etc.); and direction of travel.

SOME OTHER THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT CALLING THE POLICE:

Calls for police service are ranked in priority order depending upon their urgency.

1. Certain suspicious activities you may report to us will require immediate or emergency responses. In those cases, we dispatch patrol cars as quickly as possible.
2. Sometimes, however, we may designate your call as “routine” which means that a police car may not be dispatched until one is available within your response zone. We do that in some non-emergency situations to enable us to provide quicker response in the more serious incidents.
3. Finally, some complaints may be taken by telephone, and don’t require that a patrol car be dispatched. For instance, if your bicycle is stolen, you can give your report by phone. In those cases, call the non-emergency number 373-2222, and the operator will forward you to the telephone response unit who will assist you in taking a report.

However, **any time** you need a police officer to respond to a scene, **call 373-2222** (*for non-emergencies*) or **911** (*for emergencies*) - even in “routine” situations!

REMEMBER: Anything unusual should be reported to police. Don’t attempt to investigate strange actions or suspects yourself!

S. P. Roberts
Crime Prevention Officer 373-7707

Emergencies
911
Non-Emergencies/Telephone Response Unit (TRU)
373-2222

